United Nations S/PV.7916

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7916th meeting
Wednesday, 5 April 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Sison	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia (S/2017/252)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia (S/2017/252)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Colombia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/252, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Colombia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Arnault.

Mr. Arnault: I would like to thank the Security Council for allowing me to provide an update on developments in the implementation of the Colombia Final Peace Agreement and the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Colombia since the period covered by the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/252).

At the outset, however, I would like to convey to Ambassador María Emma Mejía Vélez the deepest sympathy of the United Nations in the wake of the tragedy in Mocoa, in the Putumayo department. I would also like to commend the quick and effective response of the national disaster management system, under the leadership of President Santos Calderón, and to reaffirm the willingness of the United Nations to support the national efforts to rescue and rebuild.

Several significant developments have taken place in the past two weeks. On 22 March the legislation on an integral justice, truth, reparation and non-repetition system was passed. It is of course a critical part of the Peace Agreement and at the core of efforts to reconcile the rights of the victims with the requirements of the transition from war to peace. A ceremony took place in Bogotá today at which the President signed decrees establishing a Truth Commission, a special unit to search for persons who disappeared as a result of the conflict and a selection committee for designating the magistrates of the Special Peace Jurisdiction, the members of the Truth Commission and the head of the special unit. The day before yesterday, a law intended to contribute to the legal security and stability of the implementation process was also passed. It commits Government officials to complying effectively with the provisions of the Peace Agreement.

A number of other steps that are provided for in the Agreement were also taken, including the transmittal of the Final Peace Agreement to the Council and the appointment of Felipe González Márquez, former Prime Minister of Spain, and José Mujica, former President of Uruguay, who will constitute the international verification component of the Peace Implementation Commission. They are supported by a secretariat made up of two very competent Colombian non-governmental organizations and backed by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies of the University of Notre Dame.

There has been some progress, which we expect will continue, on the separation of minors from the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). As of 2 April, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross, 57 minors had been separated, in compliance with the commitment made by the group in May 2016. Yesterday the Government announced that the FARC had formally presented it with a list of its armed members gathered in the zones, who number 6,804, as well as a first list of 1,541 militia members.

I should make special mention of developments relating to the agreement concluded between the Government of Colombia and the FARC on the control of illegal drugs. I should recall here that the drug economy helped to sustain the Colombia conflict for decades, and that in turn the peace process has real potential for helping to combat it. In that context, the Colombian Government and the FARC agreed in January on a package of incentives to farmers willing to proceed with voluntary eradication. To date, through negotiations with communities, more than 55,000 families have volunteered to enter the crop-

substitution programme. The Government is currently working on putting together the two-year package of incentives, including monthly payments to farmers; food security; productive projects; and technical support and monitoring. Delivery of the package is to begin in June.

Another significant development is the assumption of the vice-presidency by retired National Police of Colombia General Óscar Naranjo, who was also a member of the Government's peace negotiating team. His stated focus will be on the implementation of the peace agreement, security, counter-narcotics and the protection of community leaders and human rights defenders who have been victims of a pattern of killings and threats — a trend that has seen an increase in recent months. All of these issues are clearly interlinked and deserve this kind of sustained attention at the highest level of Government.

In direct relation to the Mission's mandate, the weapons laydown process has moved forward in the past 15 days. Since 24 March, the Mission has identified, marked and registered the weapons that FARC combatants brought to the camps. This exercise is nearly completed. In addition, we expect to store very shortly in the Mission's containers the weapons of all those FARC members that will participate in the implementation of the peace agreement. Numbering about 1,000, those members are involved in the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, training for security functions, crop substitution, humanitarian demining, and peace education.

The next step for the Mission is the collection of weapons and the destruction of unstable armaments in a considerable number of arms and ammunition caches spread throughout vast, difficult-to-access areas. Several such caches have already been visited, and some explosives have been destroyed. However, now that FARC combatants are assembled in the 26 zones, that operation can be carried out at full scale. The Mission met with the FARC today in Bogotá to work on a detailed plan for systematic access to the caches, and in meetings this week the Colombian army has pledged its full support for this endeavour.

While these developments confirm that the implementation of the peace agreement is a very dynamic process, there have been concerns with regard to the slow pace of implementation in a number of sensitive areas mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. These concerns relate in particular to the construction and equipment of FARC camps, the implementation of the amnesty law, the implementation of security guarantees and the plans for the reintegration of FARC combatants.

In that respect, at a meeting on 25 and 26 March in Cartagena to take stock of implementation 100 days after the signing of the peace agreement, the parties made important and detailed commitments to accelerating implementation precisely in those areas and in the adoption of the legislative agenda of the peace agreement. We welcome those commitments. Like the parties themselves, we believe that while the consolidation of peace will be a long-term process, there is a relatively small window of opportunity to establish solid foundations for it through the laying down of weapons, the reintegration of FARC combatants, and the delivery of peace dividends to the most affected people and areas.

Let me end by expressing our full support for the planned visit of the Security Council to Colombia next month. Since the beginning of its involvement in January of last year, the unanimous support of the Security Council has been perceived in Colombia as a guarantee of success. Its visit will provide further assurance to that effect. Indeed, this is precisely the juncture at which the international community, and this Council in particular, should voice its interest, its encouragement, and its support for the efforts of the parties and all those involved in the building of peace in Colombia.

The President: I thank Mr. Arnault for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Arnault for his briefing, his recent report (S/2017/252) and the hard work he has done on our collective behalf.

At the outset, I would like to express my condolences to Ms. Mejía Vélez following the tragic loss of life in the Mocoa landslides at the weekend. It was such an awful tragedy, and the people of Mocoa and Colombia as a whole are in our thoughts. The disaster has cast a shadow over what has been a very positive few months for Colombia. And yet, despite the terrible loss of life, I have been struck by the resilience and resolve shown in response. I am pleased that it is a shared resolve, with the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de

Colombia (FARC) offering to work side by side with the Government to help rebuild the town. That is the same shared commitment that will be needed from the Colombian Government, the FARC and the United Nations Mission in Colombia as we write a new chapter in the country's history.

I am very pleased to see the progress already being made. The Government has committed to making peace a reality for all Colombians. The FARC have moved over 6,800 of its members into the transition zones to begin the process of laying down arms, as Mr. Arnault has just updated us. And I am reassured by his commitment, and that of his staff, as they move as swiftly as possible to meet the tough time frames ahead. We recognize that the scale of the Mission's work is ambitious and challenging, and he has our full support in those efforts.

As with all post-conflict situations, sustained implementation is vital. We have learned from our own experiences in Northern Ireland that building peace requires a comprehensive, sustained and joined-up effort. There is no quick fix. Establishing and maintaining momentum in the early stages, though, is critical. There has been steady progress, including on the legislative track with the amnesty law and special jurisprudence for peace, passed by Congress. I also welcome the report that 1,000 FARC weapons have already been taken off the battlefield. That has been made possible by the continued commitment of both the Government and the FARC to meeting the 180-day time frame.

I recognize that this has been an ambitious timeline and encourage both sides to continue to work towards the final goal of complete disarmament. In the meantime, it is important that visible steps be taken to deliver implementation in the transition zones, including the provision of health facilities. Amid the progress, we are concerned by the activity of non-State armed groups, including the National Liberation Army and criminal attacks against community leaders and human rights defenders, as verified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reports in March. These attacks are a threat to public confidence in the peace agreement, especially in isolated and vulnerable communities. A robust, coordinated response from the Government is needed to ensure security in all areas vacated by the FARC, and I welcome efforts taken so far, including the establishment of the commission on security guarantees, which I very much hope will cooperate effectively with civil society.

In the coming months, politics in Colombia will increasingly focus on next year's presidential and legislative elections. No one doubts the commitments of both parties to achieve peace but, during the election period, it will be crucial that work continue on the structures and mechanisms needed for the long-term reintegration of the FARC and the development of areas affected by the conflict. The Colombian Government should feel assured that the international community is ready to assist in any way it can with these efforts. As the penholder in the Security Council and as a witness to the handing over of the peace agreement to the Secretary-General two weeks ago, the United Kingdom stands ready to play our part.

We also look forward to the Council's visit in May, which will give us a clear sense of progress and demonstrate our continued support for peace in Colombia.

Finally, before giving up the floor, I would like to say that, as we meet today, we should reflect not just on the positive developments that Colombia has seen in recent months, but also on the positive role that the Council has played in bringing that progress about. That is a role that we do not play with respect to every single issue on our agenda. I hope that Colombia gives us all in this chamber increased hope and belief in the power of the Security Council to deliver peace and security. Furthermore, I hope that we can channel this spirit into the other difficult issues that we face.

Mr. Skau (Sweden) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset I wish, on behalf of the Government of Sweden, to express our sincerest condolences to the Government and people of Colombia with respect to the tragic loss of life in Putumayo. We stand with Ambassador Mejía Vélez at this difficult time. Our embassy in Bogotá and the Swedish Government are ready to assist in every way possible. I also want to extend my most sincere personal condolences.

Almost 20 years ago, I lived in Putumayo working for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. I have spent a great deal of time in the city of Mocoa and have dear friends there. Consequently, I know that the people will face this tremendous challenge with their incomparable human spirit — the Colombian spirit.

(*spoke in English*)

Turning to the topic of today's meeting, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/252) and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jean Arnault for his briefing. Sweden has a long-standing commitment to peace in Colombia and strongly supports the work of the United Nations Mission in Colombia.

We commend the firm commitment of the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo to the peace process, and their continuous efforts to overcome challenges to the full implementation of the peace agreement. In that regard, we welcome the recent adoption by the Colombian senate on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in Colombia, which will be crucial to the further implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. Those historic steps forward are a testament to the resilience of the peace process and the commitment of the parties.

We particularly welcome the strong focus on child protection and the full engagement of women in the peace agreement in Colombia. It serves as a model for other peace processes. The agreement sets child-centred guiding principles, with a focus on the treatment of separated children as victims, a gender-sensitive approach and family and community-based reintegration. The full and active inclusion of women in the peace process and the inclusion of women's groups in its implementation, will also help ensure that this gender-sensitive approach is maintained.

The peace agreement marked a new beginning for Colombia. The international community must stand behind a committed and sustained effort to support the peace process, so that it can rapidly deliver tangible peace dividends for the people of Colombia. Now is a unique moment for peace in Colombia and an opportunity that must not be missed.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by once again conveying our deep solidarity with Colombia following the tragic events in the Mocoa region. The death toll now stands at almost 300. President Hollande immediately offered his condolences to President Santos and the people of Colombia. We have indicated our readiness to provide any assistance upon the request of the Colombian Government. I remind my Colombian colleague, who has acted commendably, that we stand by the people of Colombia now, more than ever, in the face of this terrible ordeal.

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, for his illuminating briefing and his exemplary commitment, as well as that of his teams. Naturally, he can count on the full support of France and the other members of the Security Council, I would venture.

France fully supports the courageous peace process led by President Santos. That is the central message that President Hollande conveyed when he was in Colombia in January. During that trip, he and his Colombian counterpart visited one of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) demobilization zone. We once again welcome the parties' unshakeable desire to bring about peace and their full compliance with the ceasefire since the signing of the peace agreement. Their determination to close that chapter after more than 50 years of conflict shows that peace is always possible, regardless of what obstacles must be overcome.

For all of us in the Security Council, which has dealt with numerous crises all over the world, this is a source of hope and encouragement. France will do its part in working for the consolidation of peace in Colombia. French aid stands at around €820 million in gifts and loans linked to post-conflict initiatives, primarily in the areas of rural development, land governance and demining. We also directly contributed €3 million to the European Union Trust Fund. We are encouraged by the measures taken by the parties with regard to the implementation of the peace agreement. The FARC-EP's movement to demobilization zones and the surrender of the first weapons to the United Nations are major steps in the establishment of lasting peace in Colombia. We warmly welcome those developments.

We hope that, with the commitment and will of all, the 180-day deadline for the full surrender of FARC-EP weapons to the United Nations will be met. With the effective launching of the demobilization process, the implementation of the peace agreement is entering a critical phase. In that regard, it is essential not to underestimate the challenges that will be encountered in the transition to lasting peace and to create as soon as possible the necessary conditions for peacefully reintegrating those who are demobilized. Specifically, that will require the ability to offer prospects of socioeconomic reintegration to ex-combattants through

development of zones affected by the conflict and the expeditious implementation of legal and security guarantees stipulated in the peace agreement.

The noted trend of attacks and intimidation during the past few months against community leaders and human rights activists is a cause for concern. We know that the Colombian authorities are committed to take all necessary measures to respond to that situation.

Finally, we are pleased to see that the United Nations is doing its part in supporting the process, at the request of the parties. The deployment of the Mission on time is good news. It will enable the Mission to participate actively in the work of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism as it relates to the ceasefire, and to coordinate the process of the FARC-EP surrendering their weapons. It shows that the United Nations can live up to those expectations. We are only too pleased.

The Security Council's upcoming visit to Colombia next week will be yet another example of our mobilization on that issue and of our unanimous will to doing whatever is necessary to meet the needs of the parties by providing them effective support along their path towards lasting peace.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues by conveying the solidarity of Bolivia with the Government and the people of the Republic of Colombia for the hundreds of people killed, injured or affected by flooding, overflowing of rivers and landslides in Mocoa, Putumayo.

As my Government has expressed, we are naturally at the disposal of our brothers and sisters in Colombia to provide needed help in this difficult time. We welcome the distinguished Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Mariana Mejía. I also wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, Mr. Jean Arnault, for having shared the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/252) with the Security Council, as well as for his efforts and capable leadership in this delicate matter.

In the period Mr. Arnault spoke of, we witnessed historic moments for the world and particularly for Latin America and the Caribbean, in the framework of the peace process between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). The first days of February, we saw more than 6,000 FARC-EP guerillas mobilizing towards the zones and points — when we witnessed the imminent beginning of the path towards peace, which Colombia has sought for almost five decades.

One month later, the FARC-EP began to surrender their weapons. To date, one thousand weapons have been turned in and nearly all of the weapons in the zones have been registered and marked by the United Nations. We are currently in one of the most complicated phases of the peace process — which requires the understanding of the parties in addressing unforeseen problems that may arise — but there is no doubt that the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP are committed to the peace process. I recall the words of President Evo Morales, who stated that,

> "everyone knows that this peace process has not been easy and maintaining it will require just as much effort as it took to achieve it".

In that regard, we welcome the communiqué issued by the Government and the FARC-EP, following the joint meeting held on 26 March, during which the first 100 days following the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement were assessed. Six key points, which should be highlighted here today, were raised at that meeting.

First, with regard to prioritizing the standards required for the implementation of the final agreement, we would like to highlight efforts to promote the enactment of a comprehensive rural development law, which would address one of the root causes of conflict by eradicating abject poverty in rural areas, ensuring the protection of land and property rights and promoting quality, inter alia. The second point refers to the implementation of a national political pact that would ban the use of weapons in the political arena. The third point relates to transforming the FARC-EP into a legal political party, including militias. The fourth point covers the implementation of an amnesty law, which is a key issue, as well as reintegration with a view to providing economic and social security for members of the FARC, once the legalization process has been concluded. We believe that that is a vital point in the peace process. We encourage the implementation of projects that would allow FARC members to return to civilian life. The fifth point relates to the Government's commitment to ensuring the return of all infrastructure to the veredas by the end of this month, such as basic services, medical equipment and ambulances for each

area. The sixth and final point references adhering to the timeline for the laying down of weapons.

We welcome the establishment of the national commission on security guarantees. We hope that it will greatly assist in reducing the number of violent acts committed against civil society and community leaders in affected areas. We call for the redoubling of efforts to ensure their personal safety and the full enjoyment of their civil and political rights. Similarly, we welcome the signature of decrees to establish a committee for truth and unity in the quest for missing persons.

We also welcome the appointment of former Presidents José Alberto "Pepe" Mujica Cordano and Felipe González Márquez as supervisors of the international component of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. In line with those parameters, we would like to convey to the Security Council and the United Nations Mission in Colombia our ongoing support for the commitments made by the parties. We would like to highlight the support provided by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States to the sister Republic of Colombia and to the United Nations Mission, which Bolivia proudly assists with a large number of observers.

We note the observations made by the Secretary-General in his report. We acknowledge the important work the United Nations conducts in the country. As mentioned earlier, there are some logistical and administrative challenges, which we are sure will be overcome gradually. In that regard, we thank the United Nations Mission team for its support, as well as the United Nations Development Programme in Colombia. We eagerly await the Security Council's visit to Colombia in May.

Once again, as has been done so often in the Chamber while addressing this very important topic, I would like to pay tribute to a man who described himself as someone who conspired for peace in Colombia — renowned author Gabriel García Márquez. As he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982, he stated that neither floods nor plagues, famines nor cataclysms, nor even the eternal wars of century upon century, have been able to subdue the persistent advantage of life over death.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Although the Government of Uruguay has already conveyed its sympathy directly to the Government of Colombia, once again, it extends the solidarity and condolences of the people of Uruguay to Ambassador María Mejía Vélez, following the tragedy in Putumayo.

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Jean Arnault for his comprehensive briefing and, above all, for the work he and his team are conducting in Colombia.

Our statement today aims to reiterate Uruguay's encouragement to and support of the peace process in Colombia and its principal protagonists — the Government, the people of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo. We continue to reiterate that for us, they have shown and continue to show a commitment to peace and are persistent in conveying a message of hope to the international community — where there is a will, objectives can be achieved in spite of the many difficulties that may be encountered along the way. That is why we are taking the initiative, during our presidency of the Security Council next month, to have the members of the Security Council visit Colombia from 3 to 5 May as a demonstration of our direct support to all those taking part in the peace process and trust in their work. It also serves to send a clear signal about the importance that the Council has given to its commitment to support the peace process and provide monitoring through the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Colombia.

Some months ago, we said that the peace talks and the signing of the Final Peace Agreement were the easy part of the process; the hard part started the day after the agreement was signed. We are guided on the path ahead by the resolute will of the parties and by our support of and commitment to the peace process. We would like to point out that we believe that both the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/252) and Mr. Arnault's briefing are very encouraging. They show that, in spite of the challenges in various areas, considerable progress has been made in implementing the peace agreement. We believe that the role of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, which is made up of three Government representatives and three FARC-EP representatives, is to supervise the implementation of the agreement within the deadlines set. We believe that progress should be achieved simultaneously in all sections of the agreement. It is therefore important to identify delays or flaws early in the implementation process.

We stress the vital importance of the promulgation of the amnesty law on 30 December 2016 and the decree for its enforcement on 17 February, the submission to Parliament on 1 February of a draft bill on the political reintegration of the FARC-EP and the adoption by Congress of the legislative bill on the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-repetition, including a Special Jurisdiction for Peace. That system of transitional justice is a fundamental component of the peace agreement and that is why we stress the need for ongoing legislative adjustment.

The Mission has continued to make progress in its work. We have been informed that during the reporting period, the Government, the FARC-EP and the Mission have cooperated effectively at the national, regional and local levels. We note, inter alia, that communication strategies have improved and there has been progress in finding solutions to logistical problems and in providing medical care. We call on the parties to redouble their efforts to solve the logistical challenges that remain a source of concern, such as insecurity in rural areas, which are greatly affected by the conflict due to their links to the illegal economy, violence against human rights defenders and the reintegration of members of the FARC-EP into the civilian, economic, social and political life of the country.

Uruguay pays particular attention to the rights of women, children and vulnerable social groups. We welcome the implementation of the protocol for the separation of minors from the ranks of the FARC-EP and the launch of a reintegration programme, with the support of the Red Cross, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and Colombia's Presidential Council for Human Rights.

Lastly, we welcome the joint communiqué issued on 26 March by the Government of Colombia and the FARC, in which they reported on the meeting held to evaluate the 100 days of the implementation of the Peace Agreement, especially as it relates to the laying down of weapons and the status of gathering areas for FARC-EP members, including their reintegration into civilian life. That exercise in assessing the implementation of reciprocal obligations contributes to building confidence between the parties and to cohesion within the FARC-EP, as well as reassuring those who might feel threatened or whose expectations are diminished. To all those involved, we are confident that their perseverance will result in the successful conclusion of the peace process.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): First of all, I would like to welcome Ambassador María Emma Mejía Vélez to the Chamber. Japan offers its deep condolences to the people of Colombia on the tragedy caused by the terrible landslide and flooding. As a nation that often suffers from such tragedies, we express our deep sympathy and solidarity with the people of Colombia.

I thank Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia, for his informative updates. Japan is very encouraged that under his leadership the United Nations Mission in Colombia is laying a solid foundation for a successful peace process. Japan appreciates his commitment and dedication.

In reiterating Japan's full support to the people of Colombia, I will focus on three points today.

First, we welcome the fact that the peace process is largely on track. We commend the efforts and firm commitment of all parties, which constitute the most important part of the peace process. Keeping in mind the result of the referendum held in October 2016, we hope that the overall success of these early stages will contribute to a firm national consensus towards the Peace Agreement.

Secondly, it is important that the Council be united in its commitment to this issue. In that regard, the Security Council's visit next month will be an important opportunity to convey to the parties the Council's strong commitment to the peace process in Colombia and its support for the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement.

Thirdly, the presence and the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is vital in bridging gaps between the parties and in reducing mistrust. We fully support the work of Special Representative Arnault, and particularly urge him to ensure the successful completion of the laying down of arms. It is important that this effort succeed in order to secure ustained peace in Colombia.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Japan's firm commitment to supporting Colombia's efforts towards peace.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia, for his briefing.

On behalf of China, I would like to express our sincere condolences to Colombia with regard to the

landslide that resulted in major casualties and loss of property. China immediately provided humanitarian assistance to the Government of Colombia, and we believe that the Colombian Government and its people will overcome this disaster and rebuild their homes.

With the joint efforts of the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the implementation of the Peace Agreement has been proceeding smoothly in general.

First, about 7,000 FARC members have reached the transitory normalization zones smoothly and they are beginning to lay down their arms.

Secondly, the Government of Colombia and FARC are firmly committed to the ceasefire and no violations have been observed.

Thirdly, both parties have committed to completing the process of surrendering their weapons in the next three months. Once again, that demonstrates the determination of the Government of Colombia and the FARC to jointly take forward the peace process. That has a lot to do with the robust assistance provided by the United Nations Mission in Colombia, led by Special Representative Arnault. China appreciates the efforts by the Government of Colombia and all the other parties concerned. The internal domestic war in Colombia lasted for half a century. Healing the traumas of war is not an easy task. The leaders of the FARC have committed to transforming the FARC into a political party and to laying down arms within a specific timeline. At the same time, FARC hopes that the Government will provide concrete assurances in terms of justice, security, logistics and reintegration.

We hope that the Government of Colombia and the FARC will strengthen their cooperation to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement. China hopes that the international community, especially countries in the region, will continue to provide support to the peace process in Colombia, help increase mutual trust between the Government and the FARC, strengthen their coordination and accelerate the early completion of the surrender of weapons. We hope that the United Nations Mission in Colombia and other United Nations agencies will, on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and the independent territorial integrity of Colombia, exhibit impartiality — the principle of equity — to enhance cooperation with the Government of Colombia and the FARC and to facilitate the peace process. China supports the efforts of the Government of Colombia in taking forward the peace process and supports the United Nations Mission in Colombia in the continued implementation of its mandate.

The Security Council is to visit Colombia in early May, which China welcomes. We expect to learn about the situation there through this field visit. We believe it will help take forward the peace process towards greater development and the achievement an lasting peace in Colombia at an early date.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): At the outset, as others have done, on behalf of the Government of Italy, I would like to express, through Ambassador María Emma Mejía Vélez, my deepest condolences to the people and the Government of Colombia for the victims of the landslide in the city of Mocoa, which left more than 260 dead and many more missing or injured. Italy immediately activated emergency funding to contribute to international assistance efforts.

I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and the Secretary-General himself for their report (S/2017/252) and for their efforts in fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Colombia. Allow me to make three brief remarks.

First, we strongly support the Final Peace Agreement and commend the firm commitment of the parties to finally bring to an end to the decades-long conflict. The historical process we are witnessing would have been unthinkable without the ownership and leadership of the Colombian parties. We look forward to the Security Council mission in May to directly convey this message to the authorities and the people of Colombia.

Secondly, we encourage the parties to intensify their efforts to implement the Peace Agreement within the agreed deadline. It is important not to lose the momentum. In that respect, we welcome the commitment of the parties to complete the surrender and registration of weapons within the agreed timeline. We also welcome the measures established by the Peace Agreement on legal, security and socioeconomic issues related to reintegration.

Thirdly, reconciliation and reintegration are the cornerstones of a durable and sustainable settlement. They are a precondition to build confidence, to generate an inclusive political dialogue and to bring the concrete dividends of peace to the populations in terms of security and improved living conditions. We are

aware of the challenges ahead and stand ready to assist the Government and the parties in this endeavour, both bilaterally and at the international level.

In that regard, Italy firmly supports the European Union action for post-conflict stabilization and development in Colombia, including through the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia, to which we have contributed €3 million. I also recall our long-standing contribution to United Nations Mine Action Service programmes on humanitarian de-mining and peacebuilding and to Organization of American States activities on mine-risk education, psychological assistance and rehabilitation of the victims.

I would like to conclude by commending the efforts made by the authorities for protecting and assisting women and children involved in the conflict, as also recognized by the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in its recently adopted conclusions on the situation of children and armed conflict in Colombia.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the devastating flood and landslide in Mocoa, which left hundreds of people dead, injured or missing.

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, Mr. Jean Arnault, for his update.

Ukraine reiterates its support for Colombia's efforts in implementing the Final Peace Agreement in accordance with resolutions 2261 (2016) and 2307 (2016). We recognize the challenges the country faces in making the transition from a conflict to a post-conflict environment. It is now essential that the open dialogue that led to the Agreement continue.

In February, we observed historic images as thousands of members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias the Colombia moved into transition zones where they are starting their reintegration into new lives. Moving nearly 7,000 fighters to such zones was not an easy task; indeed, it constitutes an example of the real commitment of the parties to tackling outstanding difficulties head-on.

In the light of that, we encourage the parties to maintain their positive cooperation and momentum for the benefit of all Colombians. All political forces and all sectors of Colombian society should be actively engaged in this crucial endeavour. Broader unity around the Peace Agreement is indispensable to achieving the Agreement's goals with regard to ceasefire and the laying down of arms, as well as rural reform, combating illicit drugs and expanding political participation. While moving ahead with the peace process in all its complexity, it is also important to keep in focus the needs and best interests of children affected by conflict, as well as a gender perspective.

The cases of violence against human rights defenders mentioned in the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2017/252) are of concern. We believe that the end of impunity is crucial to ensuring comprehensive peace in the country. In that regard, we take positive note of the recent legislation, including the amnesty law passed last December and the law establishing the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-repetition, approved by Congress on 13 March.

We commend international efforts in support of implementation of the Peace Agreement, in particular those States Members of the United Nations that have provided observers for the United Nations Mission, as well as the role played by the guarantors and supporting countries during the peace process. The Security Council should continue to back parties as they advance in implementing the provisions of the Final Peace Agreement.

We look forward to the Security Council's visit to Colombia next month so as to better appreciate the aspirations and concerns of the parties. On the other hand, such a visit will demonstrate the Council's full commitment to long-lasting peace in Colombia. We hope that the Colombian experience of engaging the United Nations as the international component of the tripartite mechanism will become an illustrative success story for the region and beyond.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for having convened today's meeting. and especially for having invited our colleague Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez, which gives me an opportunity to renew the sincere condolences of the Senegalese people to the people of Colombia after the catastrophic natural disaster in the form of the earthquake and mudslides that took place in Mocoa on 2 April, leading to the loss of many lives and much property damage.

I would also like to thank Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, for the clarity

of his presentation and his tireless efforts. Under Mr. Arnault's leadership, the Mission has already proved to be effective and productive, especially when it comes to the coordination of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and the provision of support for the demilitarization of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias the Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP).

Senegal is pleased at the major progress made, despite delays, in the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC, which put an end to an armed conflict that lasted over 50 years. The Colombian people owes this progress to both the Government and the FARC as a result of their efforts to accelerate the implementation of commitments made in the framework of the Peace Agreement. The list of clear-minded, courageous constitutional, legislative, institutional and other measures taken and implemented since the beginning of the peace process, the most recent of which the Special Representative mentioned in his briefing, is a long one. I will therefore not dwell on them, but rather go directly to my point.

Senegal commends the fact that the ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities are still holding and that no casualties have been reported, which eloquently reflects the parties' strong determination to keep to the 180-day timeline established by the Peace Agreement, despite the delay, for completing the laying down of arms. In addition, we welcome the FARC-EP's renewed commitment to transform itself into a political party, as well as the commitment of its leader, Rodrigo Londoño, that the group will not field candidates in the 2018 presidential election, in order to foster national consensus around a candidate that guarantees the continued implementation of the Final Peace Agreement. That is important.

The process of the laying down of arms, which began on 1 March, is an important step in the implementation of the Peace Agreement. As of 11 March, the commission for the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism reported a number of weapons handed over. However, we remain concerned about the actions of certain non-State armed groups that have taken over some of the areas evacuated by the FARC and are competing for control of illegal activities, including illegal mining, drug trafficking or other activities, thereby establishing a climate of insecurity marked by attacks and acts of intimidation that unfortunately target members of civil society and human rights defenders. We denounce and condemn those practices.

It is important that the security gap created by the departure of FARC combatants be rapidly filled. The desertion of several FARC fighters in the south-eastern and Pacific coast regions, some 2 to 5 per cent of their former membership, is also a matter of deep concern.

The progress I just referred to must be accompanied by constant support for the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, made up of the High Commissioner for Peace, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister Counsellor for Post-Conflict, as well as three high-level members of FARC-EP. It is also true that at this stage of the process of implementation of the agreements, in order to overcome the delay previously noted, efforts need to be redoubled and concentrated in terms of building FARC-EP camps, together with the necessary communities, the security of FARC ex-combatants and their reintegration into society as a political party and as participants in the economic fabric of the country.

In conclusion, Senegal wishes to reaffirm its support for and commitment to peace in Colombia, with the reasonable hope that the Peace Agreement and the support of the international community will make it possible to put an end to a conflict that has lasted all too long. Mr. Arnault was correct in saying that the upcoming visit of the Security Council to Colombia that is planned for May under the South American presidency of Uruguay is a very timely one.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to echo the words of condolence expressed by other speakers and convey them to the people and the Government of Colombia in the wake of the natural disaster in Mocoa. We extend our sympathy to the families of those who died, and we hope that the joint efforts of the Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in order to address the consequences of the flood and the landslide will translate into the process of national reconciliation and advancement of the peace process.

We are grateful to Mr. Jean Arnault for his briefing. We note that progress has been made in the peace process in Colombia and hope that both sides will fulfil their commitments faithfully and in a timely manner, which is particularly important in this case.

We support the activities of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, which oversees the disarmament and reintegration processes. We welcome the guerrillas' political confirmation of their intent to disarm in line with the timeline. We believe that the incentive that guides the FARC in this process is the possibility of achieving their political ambitions in the upcoming 2018 election campaign.

We take a positive view of the Colombian Parliament's speedy passage of laws aimed at creating a legal basis for the peace process, including the laws on amnesty and the transitional justice system. This step and future ones to be taken within the framework of the peace process should provide a solid foundation for national reconciliation and future post-conflict changes in Colombia.

We are, however, concerned by indications that certain difficulties exist in terms of the Government's discharging its obligations, a situation that could have a negative impact on the disarmament process. The deterioration of the guerrillas' socioeconomic situation owing to shortcomings on the part of the Government could result in uncontrolled desertions from FARC. As the Council is aware, to date already about 500 people have stated that they will not follow the orders of the guerrilla leadership. These people are highly trained armed fighters and will inevitably join different criminal groups, which could lead to a new spiral of violence in the country. We hope that the current difficulties are only temporary and that the Government will do everything in its power to overcome them.

In that regard, we welcome the decision taken by the President of the country, Mr. Santos, to send members of his cabinet to FARC camps in order to assess the arrangements made there for FARC members who support the peace process. Future steps to be taken by the United Nations to promote the peace process can be undertaken once the relevant parameters have been agreed with the Government of Colombia and FARC.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/252) does not contain any recommendations on an eventual second mission in Colombia. Neither Bogotá or the guerrillas have taken a position on this issue. In general, our view is that we should avoid endowing the mission with excessive powers and thereby turning it into an external watchdog with respect to the activities of the sovereign Colombian Government.

We still need to determine whether the parties and the United Nations will be able to conclude the disarmament and demobilization process within the set timeline and what the security conditions will be when the mandate of the current Mission expires. Obviously, at that time we will be discussing reductions in the military and police components. However, when we take that decision, we must ensure that the withdrawal of all observers does not lead to a security vacuum. We in turn intend to continue to fully support the peace process in Colombia.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I wish to greet the Permanent Representative of Colombia in this Chamber and also to join others in expressing our heartfelt condolences to the people of Colombia on the tragic landslide in Mocoa.

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, for his briefing and for the effective contribution made by the United Nations Mission in Colombia to the peace process in the country. We welcome the many positive developments that have been witnessed. My delegation wishes to make the following observations and recommendations with a view to furthering the peace process.

The Colombian Constitutional Court will need to improve the revised peace agreement adopted by the Congress for it to take effect as soon as possible. We commend the formation of the transitional justice tribunal, the truth commission and the missing persons search unit to redress the grievances of the 8 million victims. The amnesty law ratified by President Santos should result in further bills and pardons, with measures for the demobilization and disarmament of some 7,000 Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) rebels.

The process of the laying down of weapons must be rigorously carried out in the 26 demobilization camps. Thus the active coordination of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, consisting of the United Nations, the Government and FARC, will accelerate the process of full and effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Equally important is the peaceful reintegration of former FARC rebels into society. At the same time, we must ensure that all parties to the peace process strictly comply not only with the provisions of the peace agreement but also with international humanitarian law.

We encourage the Government to continue negotiations with the largest left-wing rebel group, the National Liberation Army, with a view to ending the confrontation. We are concerned that the National Liberation Army is continuing to commit acts of violence that destabilize the country, hence we urge that a bilateral ceasefire agreement be concluded at the very earliest.

We need a vision of peace that is truly bottom-up, one that endeavours to break the vicious circle of violence and leads to a true institutional strengthening and the protection of peoples' rights. The country has lost years of potential progress, and it is thus critical to create an adequate socioeconomic structure that is able to support this young democracy. The private sector has inputs to make and must unite with the public sector to move Colombia forward.

It is clear that a post-conflict Colombia will pose challenges and offer opportunities. Job creation and the establishment of infrastructure and State services such as schools and hospitals in former guerrilla strongholds will narrow the wide gap between rural and urban areas. In addition, dismantling organized-crime networks will have to remain a priority.

Achieving peace in Colombia is critical to achieving a more stable world. Such a commitment is necessary, together with that of the United Nations system and regional organizations, especially the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, in assisting Colombia with the reform process.

Finally, the ceasefire is still fragile, but the future of Colombia holds the promise of progress. Kazakhstan will work with the United Nations and other Member States to overcome challenges and to build a peace that lives up to the aspirations of the Colombian nation and the world. We look forward to visiting Columbia in May to attest to our strong support for the peace process in the country.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by offering the sincere condolences of Ethiopia to Ambassador María Mejía Vélez following the death and destruction caused by the landslide in Colombia this past weekend. We are in sympathy and solidarity with the families of the victims as well as with the people and the Government of Colombia.

Let me also join others in expressing our thanks to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Arnault for his briefing on the latest report of the Secretary-General on Colombia (S/2017/252) and the activities of the United Nations Mission in Colombia over the past three months.

The significant developments that have taken place in the process of the implementation of the peace agreement, including the disarmament of former combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which started recently, is very encouraging, as is the bilateral ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities between the Government and the FARC, which has been holding with no casualties registered. Of course, we understand that this is only the beginning of a long and arduous process, and we take note of some of the difficult and sensitive issues involved which need to be handled carefully, including the amnesty law, reintegration and the transformation of FARC into a political party, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General. We also recognize the potential complications ahead in relation to the upcoming general elections due to take place in May 2018.

This notwithstanding, the progress made recently has been remarkable, leading to a renewed sense of hope and optimism for lasting peace in Colombia. Both parties deserve to be commended for reaffirming their political will and commitment to advancing the implementation the Peace Agreement. It is imperative that the parties continue to stay the course and that the positive momentum generated recently be sustained so as to achieve the difficult transition to peace. The parties certainly need the continued support of the international community, with full respect for the peace process by the parties and by the Colombian people in general. In that regard, we reiterate our appreciation to the countries of the region and other international partners that continue to closely support the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

The role of the United Nations Mission in Colombia continues to be very important, and we are pleased to note that the Mission has reached its full operational capacity. We express our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Arnault as well as the United Nations personnel in Colombia for all their efforts to supporting the Peace Agreement.

Finally, we look forward to our visit to Colombia next month, which will afford us an opportunity to express support for, and solidarity with, Colombia

and to convey a strong message of encouragement to the parties for their commitment to implement to the Peace Agreement.

Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to join my colleagues in expressing our condolences to the Government and the people of Colombia on the hundreds of Colombian lives claimed by the landslide.

I would like also to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing. I have three brief points to make.

First, my delegation commends the efforts of the two parties to the Final Peace Agreement and the reaffirmation of their commitment to abide by the timelines specified by the Agreement, despite the logistical issues that have led to relative delays. In in that regard, we welcome the successful cantonment of combatants in the agreed-upon zones. We believe that the next phase should focus on efforts to reintegrate members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia into Colombian society.

Secondly, we commend the efforts and positive and effective steps taken by the Government of Colombia in implementing the Peace Agreement, in particular with regard to legislation aimed at prosecuting the perpetrators of crimes committed during the conflict, as well as the establishment of other entities, including the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the Peace Agreement and, in particular the special electoral mission that will monitor ensuring participation in political life.

Thirdly, and lastly, we hope that the two parties will overcome their differences with regard to the implementation of the Peace Agreement. That includes committedly respecting the agreed timelines. In that regard, we hope that the Security Council's visit during Uruguay's presidency in May will provide impetus for the Peace Agreement in Colombia and its implementation. That would reflect international support for the Agreement.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Arnault for his briefing.

Americans are grieving today along with Colombians for the lives lost in the terrible mudslides this past weekend. We express our heartfelt condolences to the people of Colombia who were affected by that tragedy.

Special Representative Arnault is playing a critical role in supporting the implementation of the historic Final Peace Agreement.

As my colleagues know, we have begun a review of United Nations peacekeeping missions. Although the Colombia Mission is not a peacekeeping mission, the same principles of effectiveness and accountability apply. To be effective, missions must have a solid political foundation on which to build. They must enjoy the cooperation of the host countries. They must have clear realistic goals with identifiable exit strategies. And we as a body must be able to adjust those missions to fit new realities.

I want to congratulate the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism in Colombia for meeting those and additional criteria. The Mission has all the pieces in place for a successful outcome. It has a carefully designed mandate to support a clear and established peace process. It also has a clear deadline for the demobilization and disarmament of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). In that regard, I was pleased to hear that both sides are working together towards the implementation of the Peace Agreement as quickly as possible. We are thankful for both the process that they have established and the cooperation that they have achieved. We urge both sides to build on that momentum so as to move forward more quickly.

As the Security Council looks forward to continuing its support for Colombia through monitoring the next stage of the peace process, we must keep in mind the principles of effectiveness that the Council has developed. I believe that those are the building blocks of continued success in achieving lasting peace. Lasting peace in Colombia means that the Government will need to extend its authority throughout the entire State. All parties must now work with the Government to make that happen. It is no secret that, as the FARC move into demobilization zones, they leave behind remote, lawless areas that have been largely untouched by the Colombian Government. The political vacuum that that has created is a dangerous threat to long-term peace. It must be filled before other armed groups, including drug traffickers, step in.

To that end, the United States continues to enjoy strong cooperation with Colombia in combating drug trafficking. We are providing assistance to the Government in fulfilling the Peace Agreement so as to end Colombia's illicit drug problem. We hope and expect that progress will continue. As we have discussed today, much good has been done, but much more remains to be done.

During the time during which I have been here, I have learned that moments of hope and promise are truly moments to be savoured. For Colombia, this is one of those moments. The United States stands with Colombia in building lasting peace for its citizens.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Madam President, and all the members of the Security Council for the expression of solidarity made on behalf of the people of Macoa, a very harsh jungle region that has suffered a tragedy that none of us could have anticipated to befall them.

I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, and your country on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and I wish you great success in conducting the work of the Council this month. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Jean Arnault, and his entire team, because as members of the Council have indicated and have seen first-hand, we have established a level of coordination that, I believe, is very valuable and essential for the work being done.

I would like to read out something of great interest to us Colombians that the Secretary-General indicated in his report,

> "Colombia's remarkable journey towards peace has continued. The images witnessed in February of thousands of FARC-EP members making their final march into the zones where they will begin their reintegration into civilian life and FARC-EP will transform into a political organization were images of peace that many Colombians thought they would never see. These historic steps forward, as part of a comprehensive peace agreement, are testament to the resilience of the peace process and the commitment of the parties." *(S/2017/252, para. 75)*

And the numbers are proof of this. The past seven months have seen violence de-escalating at unprecedented rates in a nation that for more than 50 years dealt with a brutal internal conflict with enormous human costs. Those numbers include 1,546 days without any attacks on communities, 580 without kidnappings, 375 without assaults on public law enforcement and 307 without any incidents attributed to the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The homicide rate for the first quarter of this year is 12 per cent below last year's.

There is no question that there have been some worrying events, which we will have to address going forward, but as of today, we have fully registered 8,345 FARC-Ejército del Pueblo guerrillas and militias and more than 7,000 weapons that have been registered by the United Nations. Fifty-seven minors have been separated from the FARC so far, and the process is continuing. As the Special Representative said, on the legislative front we have also made progress on transitional justice, and yesterday President Santos Calderón signed decrees on the establishment of the Truth Commission and a special unit to search for persons who have disappeared, as part of the development of an integral system of justice, truth and reparation.

I would like to highlight two elements that I believe are important for the United Nations Mission in Colombia, because they could serve as examples for other missions in future. The first is that it has achieved a 20 per cent rate of participation of women, both military and civilian — currently the highest of any mission. That, together with the presence of a woman as Deputy Special Representative, Ms. Tania Patriota of Brazil, reinforces the strong gender dimension that has been present throughout the peace process and now in its implementation, where women are a strong presence in the ex-combatant component. The second is the regional component, where the members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States have shown the extraordinarily important part that the presence of regional mechanisms has played in settling the last remaining conflict in the American hemisphere.

I should like to highlight the confidence of the national authorities and the international community in the ceasefire and disarmament process, thanks in large part to the work of the highly innovative Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, composed of the Government, the FARC and the United Nations. My Government believes that, in order to guarantee the legitimacy and

credibility of the Mechanism, permanent and effective coordination among its members is indispensable, in compliance with the protocols governing the ceasefire, the laying down of arms and the preparatory activities of the reintegration and transition to legality, which we hope will be swift. It will also be necessary, in conformity with the scheduled programme, for the Mission to expedite the procedures for registration, identification and collection of weapons, as well as procedures for locating and destroying unstable weapons and explosives, concerning which Mr. Arnault spoke earlier. The Government is ready to provide logistical and legal means to contribute to this work.

Lastly, with respect to the killings of recent months that are referred to in the report and have been cited by a number of Council members, the Colombian Government wishes to reiterate that it is premature to affirm that all such killings are associated with the work of defending human rights or the handiwork of criminal organizations that have succeeded paramilitary groups. The authorities have been able to observe that, although in some cases this is so, it is not possible at this time to generalize about the origin of these criminal actions, which shall not prevent our Government, aware of the harmful presence of outlaw actors, to move forward with relevant public safety actions.

I conclude by reiterating our appreciation and by saying that the commitment of Colombia to implementing the mandate of the United Nations Mission is producing concrete results, which the Council will have the opportunity to see first-hand on its trip in May. We strongly hope and trust that the progress will be obvious.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. Given that all Council members have spoken in the Chamber, and with their agreement, we will forgo moving to consultations this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.